

to decide whether politics or science should prevail in establishing radiation standards for Yucca Mountain. I urge you to respect the role of the courts in its decision determining the EPA did not follow the law, and respect the right of those who live in Nevada to challenge the notion that Yucca Mountain is safe.

Science, not politics, should guide this Nation's policy on nuclear waste disposal. That is what George Bush promised when he first campaigned for President in the year 2000, and that is what he said when he came to Nevada just 3 weeks ago. He said he would respect any court ruling against Yucca Mountain.

The courts have spoken. Now it is time for the President to act on his promise as well. The second highest court in the Nation has spoken. Work on licensing Yucca Mountain cannot continue until a new radiation standard is crafted that incorporates the work of the National Academy of Sciences.

□ 2045

The President ought to stop this folly and stop it now and demand that the EPA comply with the U.S. Court of Appeals decision.

As Members of Congress, we have a responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interests of our Nation. Waiving a science-based radiation standard to expedite this project means waiving the health and safety protection that we have promised all of Americans. The last time I checked, the great State of Nevada is in the United States and deserves the same protection as any other State.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PEARCE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CONYERS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. CONYERS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Oregon?

There was no objection.

EXPIRATION OF ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, next week, the assault weapon ban expires. This ban, enacted 10 years ago, on some models has been supported by

past Presidents Ford, Reagan, Bush I, and President Clinton. It has been supported by police chiefs and officers across America, and the majority of the public. Even candidate Governor George Bush 4 years ago said he supported extending the assault weapons ban.

Today, we stand poised in 120 hours to see the assault weapons ban expire because of a lack of leadership on the part of President Bush and of the Republican leadership in Congress. It appears that there is no intention to stand up to the National Rifle Association and bring forward an opportunity for the men and women in this Chamber to be heard on this critical issue.

I suppose this should not come as a surprise when we saw the administration, President Bush, Attorney General Ashcroft cave in to the NRA when it came to eliminating within 24 hours the previous gun registration records that would have been available to this administration, to law enforcement authorities, to help in the fight against terrorism. Having the NRA trump this potentially important tool in the fight against terrorism in this country is unfathomable to most of the people I represent. But sadly, it makes sense in the upside-down way that we deal with politics and the politics of gun violence in this Chamber and in the American political system.

America has the worst record of gun violence of any developed country. There are a wide array of simple, commonsense provisions that would help deal with gun violence that would not in any way deny any legitimate hunter an opportunity to use their weapons to go out and hunt, to target shoot, legitimate collectors. There are, however, people who resist any effort at record-keeping, at enforcement, at dealing with the most simple, direct, commonsense, and nonintrusive proposals.

Does anybody think in America that we are going to be safer if the assault weapon ban expires and there are more opportunities to have assault weapons in the United States? There are people ready now to market, if the ban expires, to market new gun lines. There are people that have kits to convert weapons to make them, previously illegal, that would be lawful if the ban expires, to have these kits so they can make the conversion.

I would find it disappointing on several levels if this tragedy occurs. First, we are not going to be safer. I hear repeatedly from the people I represent that sports people do not need assault weapons to hunt game in this country. There are lots of opportunities for target shooting, for sportsman activities. Assault weapons are designed to shoot with great firepower very quickly and to generate maximum carnage on people. We will not be safer.

It will be a blow to the credibility of the political process if candidate Bush can make a promise that President Bush is not going to deliver on.

Finally, it continues the chipping away at our ability to function here

with real live legitimate problems. Gun violence is a legitimate problem. There are legitimate policy options, and we are taking them off the table.

I would hope that President Bush remembers what candidate Bush said 4 years ago and takes a small step to provide real leadership that he had promised in coming out in support of extending the assault weapon ban and calling upon the Republican leadership in Congress to follow through, allowing a vote to prevent that expiration. We have 120 hours left. I hope that the American people will avail themselves to dealing with these candidates who are out around the country to have that conversation with President Bush to follow through on his commitment.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. McDERMOTT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to take the time of the gentleman from Washington (Mr. McDERMOTT).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

SUICIDE BOMBINGS IN ISRAEL AND SYRIA'S HARBORING OF HAMAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to express my condolences to the families of the victims of the suicide bombings in Israel last week and to urge my colleagues to support Israel's continued construction of the security fence to protect their citizens from further terrorist attacks. I also ask my colleagues to join with me in calling on the Syrian Government to turn over the leaders of Hamas, the terrorist organization that has claimed responsibility for these and countless other attacks in Israel, currently operating in Damascus.

Mr. Speaker, last Tuesday, two buses were simultaneously bombed in Beer-sheba, a city in southern Israel, killing 16 passengers and injuring 97 others. It is no coincidence that the city chosen by Hamas for the attacks is in a region of Israel that is not yet protected by the security fence. Hamas terrorists were dissuaded by the fence and an Israeli military presence in other areas and opted for an easier and more vulnerable target in Beersheba. These attacks are further proof that continued